

Hon. Member that there may be different points of view, as has been acknowledged by the Hon. Member himself.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHY CHILD BENEFIT PROGRAMS NOT IMPROVED

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. I was delighted to hear this morning that he and his party have decided to listen to people. He should have done that before the Budget was brought down. It would have made matters a lot easier.

Mr. Prime Minister, this morning during the press conference, you admitted that the Budget had infringed the principles of equity and justice with respect to the elderly. Could the Prime Minister inform the House why the Government is not changing budgetary measures concerning family allowance and child tax exemptions? Do you not think the Budget has also infringed the principles of equity and justice with respect to Canadian families with children?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, a careful examination of political history would show that the one and only time the elderly in Canada suffered cutbacks in benefits was when the Liberal Government cut those benefits in 1982. This, among other things, was in fact admitted by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry, who is on the record as saying in *Hansard*: Yes, we did proceed with de-indexation of senior citizens' pensions. That is what the Hon. Member . . . He may be trying to impress his "co-leader" here today, but that is what he said.

Instead of refusing, we had the option of listening to the elderly and that is what we did. We listened to senior citizens, and unlike the Liberals, we took action to correct the situation.

REQUEST FOR CHANGES TO BUDGET

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal-Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary.

Mr. Speaker, the kind of charade the Prime Minister indulges in . . . he did the same thing after the Budget was brought down, with respect to senior citizens, and yesterday, it was the Minister of Finance who looked foolish. Could the Prime Minister be sincere, for once? Will you admit that in your Budget, you are making the same mistake with your policies for families with children as you did with senior citizens? Are you going to wait until families with children come and demonstrate on Parliament Hill to make changes in your Budget? Do you intend to change these measures as soon as possible?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member asked that question of me yesterday. At that

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time I gave him figures that showed very clearly that the least well off in the country will see their payments under the child benefit program increase quite substantially because of the increase in the child tax credit. He knows that very well, but he is persisting in putting out the wrong impression because he knows he cannot justify his figures after seeing the absolute figures. The increases in the child tax credit over the next five years will be very significant.

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THE ADMINISTRATION

APPOINTMENTS WITH MINISTERS

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Will the Prime Minister confirm that the consulting firm run by Moores and Doucet has set up, for substantial fees, meetings for their clients with members of the Conservative Cabinet other than the Minister of Fisheries?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge of what private companies do. I gave the indication yesterday of my view, which is that any such activity would be inappropriate and unacceptable. I have no knowledge that it has ever taken place, nor has the Hon. Member. In fact I think I can tell the Hon. Member that yesterday I was informed that the President of the Privy Council received a group of business people on behalf of a lobbyist who is a former press secretary to the Leader of the NDP.

REQUEST FOR INVESTIGATION

Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River): Mr. Speaker, since there are no regulations in our country concerning lobbyists, would the Prime Minister agree that he has a responsibility to investigate thoroughly the matter of this consulting firm of his good friends Frank Moores and Gerald Doucet, and report the results of that investigation to this House? Further, would he agree that he should create a list of individuals who have been clients of that firm and who, for a substantial fee, have been given privileged access to Cabinet Ministers?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, no one has been given privileged access to Cabinet information of any kind or under any circumstances. I think it can be said fairly that many people of Liberal persuasion, Conservative persuasion, and NDP persuasion, earn their living in this town by representing clients in various Departments of Government and making what I understand are legitimate representations. If the Hon. Member thinks that that is an inappropriate or an illegal way for anyone to conduct himself or his business, then he ought to say it. As I understand it, the people with whom we have dealt—former prominent members of the Liberal Party, members of the NDP, and even a couple of Conservatives—have always conducted themselves very